Ext. 332
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12 DEC 1958
BHAVANISAGAR
EXTENSION TRAINING CENTRE
19

The Forgotten Factor

A PLAY IN THREE ACTS

BY ALAN THORNHILL

THE FORGOTTEN FACTOR

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S.No 184
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THE FORGOTTEN FACTOR

by

ALAN THORNHILL

LONDON
BLANDFORD PRESS

Published 1954

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MADE IN GREAT BRITAIN

Printed and bound by the Hollen Street Press Ltd.,
London, W.1

Ext. 332

INTRODUCTION

AT one of the first trial performances of *The Forgotten Factor*—it was in a wooden barn theatre on Mackinac Island in America—the wife of a labour leader sat in the audience. In the second Act, depicting the home of Jim Rankine, the union leader, there comes the moment when the domestic wrangling of husband and wife is broken by a sudden knock on the door. Instinctively the wife sitting in the audience called, "Come in." Then she clapped her hand to her mouth in embarrassment, as it dawned on her that she was not in her own home.

I think that small incident helped us to feel that the play had passed its first test. In our early efforts at production, we lacked many things—scenery, equipment, experience. We banked everything on one quality—reality. We knew the Wilsons and the Rankines. In city after city we had met them in real life. We had stayed in their homes, sat with them at round-table conferences, listened as they fought for their convictions or spoke with honesty about their needs. We had seen "the forgotten factor" at work in their lives, breaking down barriers, settling strikes, ending deadlock. We had seen the most stubborn attitudes melt, just as dramatically as in the play. We knew in our own experience the truth of Jim Rankine's words to his men: "I saw something I never expected to see—something that changed a good-for-nothing young punk into a man, something which can change the whole of these negotiations." So there was no need to act. We only had

to be real. And that is why the Union wife in the audience was so lost in the scene that she cried, " Come in."

That was long ago. From that humble beginning in Mackinac *The Forgotten Factor* has gone far. By now the original cast have thousands of performances behind them. They are seasoned veterans of Broadway, Hollywood and the West End of London, of miners' halls in the Ruhr or vast open-air stages in India. They have faced the statesmen of the United Nations or a battery of movie cameras with equanimity. The best in professional skill goes into their production. They, and the many casts in many languages that they have trained, have taken *The Forgotten Factor* to the five continents and to many more than a million people. But the secret of their power is the same now as it was in the beginning. They are living on the stage what they know in real life. They are not play-acting. They are fighting for the hearts and minds of men. The real drama is not on the stage, it is happening in the audience.

" If a scorpion had bitten me," said an Indian after seeing the play, " I would not have noticed it."

" It is more than a play," said Arthur Hopkins, a great New York producer, " it is a national force."

The year 1940 was a desperate one for the world. The fighting in Europe which many had hopefully shrugged off as a " phoney war ", suddenly burst its bounds. The tide of destruction began to sweep across the world. No nation was secure. Americans knew that not even the Atlantic Ocean could protect their safety. Yet America seemed like a giant who could not shake off sleep. Something paralysed the motor nerve. Everyone talked ; few knew what to do. Huge production plans were set in motion, yet strikes and slow-downs in some of the most vital spots threatened the entire economy; while,

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for the ordinary fellow, the life of easy-going individualism was so much more familiar than the call to unity and total preparedness.

It was in that setting that Frank Buchman called together the first Industrial Round-Table Conferences of Moral Re-Armament. In some quiet spot, in an atmosphere of honesty and freedom, heads of industry and of trade unions came away from the heat and the technicalities of their jobs, to talk things over together in a new spirit. They brought along their wives. Problems that had plagued them for months, melted away within a few hours. "The forgotten factor in industry," said Frank Buchman, "is that God has a plan."

For a former Oxford don, whose sphere had been academic, the whole thing was a fascinating revelation. Economic and social problems that he had been apt to discuss learnedly at High Table with his colleagues, suddenly confronted him walking about on two legs. Until then he had never actually met a labour leader in his life. To his surprise he discovered that they were very human, in many ways remarkably like himself. They had families like his own, and family rows as well. He came to the conclusion that a great deal of the history of the world is made at millions of breakfast tables. For the way that a man leaves his breakfast table often determines what he will do at the office or the factory bench, in the vital interview, or around the conference table. You will notice that every scene of *The Forgotten Factor* takes place at breakfast.

How to take the spirit of these round-table conferences to the nation, quickly and effectively? That was the problem. It was at this moment that a very significant step in the whole development of Moral Re-Armament was taken. As has so often been the case, it happened quite naturally, and as a result of the initiative of Frank Buchman. We had been receiving

various distinguished guests from different parts of America. For their entertainment and enjoyment we used sometimes to regale them after supper with songs or sketches of our own making. The contributions were not too heavy or serious, but, as is usual in Moral Re-Armament, they had a point to them, and the point was driven home with fun but also with considerable force. Some of the guests were enthusiastic.

"These sketches of yours are too good to keep to yourselves," they said, "you must present them to thousands. We will hire a big hall in a neighbouring town. We will invite the whole countryside and you people will put on a show. That is the way to reach modern America."

I think we would have dismissed the whole thing as a ridiculous and fanciful idea. Not so, Frank Buchman.

"Hire your hall," he said; "in three days' time we will put on the show." So the first dramatic production of Moral Re-Armament was born. The whole countryside came and were fascinated.

Requests for repeat performances poured in from the larger cities. Soon a full-scale musical revue was on the road, travelling the length and breadth of the land, showing to the thousands everywhere what the ordinary man and his wife and children could do to bring unity and inner strength to their communities and their country.

I had always loved the theatre. In my student days, I spent nights without number perched high in the "gods" (as we called the cheapest seats in the top gallery), drinking in the plays, good, bad, and indifferent, that came my way. I realised that the theatre in its great days had always been more than entertainment or "Art for art's sake". It had something to say to its generation. Our Western theatre was born out of a determination to give to people who could not read a living

faith. Today we are faced with a spiritually illiterate generation—our modern theatre has given us many so-called "Problem" plays—is there not a place for "Answer" plays as well?

As I pondered these things, a burning desire formed in my mind to see some of the drama of these round-table conferences presented in a full-length play in the setting of industrial America. Might it not point the answer to the deepest divisions of our time? One morning I woke with a compelling urge to write. It was the kind of urge that I have come to recognise as the voice of God. Although I had no knowledge of play writing and indeed little experience of writing of any kind, except university lectures and a few book reviews, I decided to obey that inner impulse, and started on a play. In a way that I cannot explain, plot and characters immediately took shape, dialogue poured through my mind faster than I could write it down. In less than two days a three-act play was born.

It was *The Forgotten Factor.*

The national première was in Washington. Senator Harry Truman headed the list of distinguished sponsors with the late Congressman James W. Wadsworth—a democrat and a republican. After the performance, the great Arctic explorer Rear-Admiral Richard E. Byrd, spontaneously rose from his seat at the close of the play. "I must speak," he said. "Here is the chance you have been looking for to go into action to save civilisation. *The Forgotten Factor* will prove to be the deciding factor." From Washington we took it to the industrial centres of America, with the support of the great labour unions and management.

Then came the post-war years. Moral Re-Armament was increasingly recognised as the one force behind which every class, race, and creed could unite. Urgent requests began to come from country after country for Moral Re-Armament

teams and Moral Re-Armament plays. *The Forgotten Factor*, an American play, went to the world. We played it, just as it was; but East and West, in Africa or Europe, audiences seemed to feel at home. Yorkshire miners, straight from the pit, would see it and exclaim, " Champion! This is pure Yorkshire." And someone might add: " I'm going to fill two extra tubs of coal on Monday." Somehow " Herr Wilson und Herr Rankine " seemed to German audiences, crowding into half bombed-out theatres in ruined cities, familiar figures whom they recognised as like themselves. In Paris " Monsieur Wilson et Monsieur Rankine " likewise.

In the industrial North of Italy, the part of " Signor Wilson " was played by the personnel manager of the great Montecatini Chemical Works, while " Signor Rankine " was a former Communist who used to write songs for Togliatti.

In Africa 100,000 have seen the play. It has been sponsored by Indians, Europeans, and Africans together.

" Last night," said a European mine manager in Johannesburg, " I saw *The Forgotten Factor*, and never again will I treat any man as of less value than myself."

" Never again," replied the union chief of the mineworkers, " will I advocate a strike when we can settle our differences this better way."

Manilal Gandhi reviewed the play in the African paper *Indian Opinion*, which his father Mahatma Gandhi founded. " Moral Re-Armament," he wrote, " is a lighthouse in this dark and stormy world of ours, and it will guide us to the right way. We feel that the darkness that surrounded our hearts has been lifted."

Recent reports from India indicate that the vast crowds pouring into the theatres of Madras and Bombay respond to the points of the play even more quickly and more keenly than

do Western audiences. For, in a Chinese proverb that Dr. Buchman is fond of quoting, " Crows are black the whole world over." Human nature is pretty much the same, and the breakfast tables of America appear to be not unfamiliar to the parents and children of Asia and Africa and Europe alike.

The demand for these plays has become so great that now only through the films can they be brought quickly enough to the millions who are hungry for them. By the time this is printed, *The Forgotten Factor* will be beginning a new and a larger life on the screen. So, in a few years, through the sacrifice and the conviction of countless men and women, the play that first saw the light of day in a barn on Mackinac Island goes around the world.

The thing that made that labour leader's wife call out in the middle of the scene, " Come in ", is the same quality that today speaks to the hearts and minds of the millions. It is reality. The players, who in each language have taken this answer to the nations, have done it without salary, without material reward of any kind, and without personal ambition. They know that the future belongs to the people who give everything. To them, each new performance is just one more engagement in a world battle. They have only one aim and that is that every man and woman who sees *The Forgotten Factor* portrayed on the stage shall with his whole heart say " Come in! "

To what? In the words of Wilson at the end, it is " trust . . . honesty . . . yes, but it's bigger than that."

It is the promise of a new world, and the passion to make it a reality.

ALAN THORNHILL

July 1954

Characters in order of appearance

MR. RICHARD WILSON	*President of Wilson Consolidated*
MRS. WILSON – – – – – –	*His Wife*
BETTY WILSON – – – – –	*Their Daughter*
DICK WILSON – – – – – –	*Their Son*
POLLY RANKINE	*A school friend of Betty*
MRS. RANKINE – – – – –	*Her Mother*
JOE BUSH – –	*Leader of a faction in the Trade Union at the Wilson plant*
JIM RANKINE	*Trade Union Organiser in Wilson Consolidated*
MAC, BOB, JACK and others	*Workers at Wilson Consolidated*

PLACE—An Industrial Town

The action of the play takes place in an Industrial Town at the present time

ACT I, SCENE I

The main living-room of Richard Wilson's *home is large and full of sunshine on a spring morning, and the family like to use it for breakfast. Through the big windows, at the back and side, you can see the well-trimmed lawn of a pleasant, modern house, set in spacious surroundings in the most "desirable" district of a mid-west industrial town. In the distance are the factory chimneys of* Wilsons Consolidated, *near enough to be convenient for the boss, but sufficiently far away not to spoil the view.*

A spacious archway connects the room with a hall, where there is the front door and the main stairway. The furniture of the room is arranged naturally round the oval breakfast table on one side and the fireplace on the other. The draperies are light and pleasant; there are flowers everywhere, and an atmosphere of good taste and comfort without in any way being ostentatious.

Mrs. Wilson, *a handsome, rather large woman in her late forties, is coping single-handed with the family breakfast. The latest in a series of maids had suddenly left. The elegance of the room and of her rather luscious negligée suggest that she is better at planning colour schemes than at preparing a meal. A puff of smoke billowing in from the kitchen suggests trouble with the toaster, and it is at this moment that* Richard Wilson, *a greying, handsome, but also hard-drawn, man of about fifty, comes downstairs with the look of one automatically expecting service.*

Wilson Myrtle! Where's my breakfast? Myrtle!
(*A cloud of smoke comes from kitchen*)
Myrtle! What's going on there?

MRS. WILSON (*Her arm appears holding a charred piece of toast*) It's all right, Richard, it's only the toast.

WILSON Oh, it's you, Louise. What are you doing in the kitchen? Where's Myrtle?

MRS. W. I told you, Myrtle left yesterday. Oh, the coffee! (*Hasty exit*)

WILSON Can't you get another maid, for goodness' sake?

MRS. W. (*Re-entering with coffee pot*) Another maid! You try and find a maid. You have no idea how difficult they are. And they are all getting jobs in your factory.

WILSON So that's the bottleneck. At least we might have a little butter on the table. (*Mrs. Wilson goes again*) How do you expect me to keep a thousand men at work if you can't keep one cook!

MRS. W. (*Back once more*) We'll try and have things a little more organised by tomorrow.

WILSON Suppose we are without a maid for a couple of days, does everything have to be upside down? I should have thought any housewife could provide a simple breakfast.

MRS. W. You should have married a cook or a housekeeper, Richard.

WILSON There was a time when I thought I had.

(*She offers him a bowl containing a forbidding looking mixture*)

MRS. W. Darling, this is raw and full of vitamins. With all these wonderful new health foods, cooking is practically unnecessary.

WILSON (*Removing his sample mouthful*) I'm coming to the same conclusion about eating.

MRS. W. I'm sorry, darling, You know you are looking a little tired, dear.

WILSON Tired! I'm just about worn out, It was past

midnight before we quit and still no agreement in sight.

MRS. W. Why you men have to confer so much I don't know.

WILSON (*Picking up one of the bills*) What's this? "One leopard skin coat, $150.50. One leopard skin hat, $35,98." Are (*Mrs. Wilson reaches for the bill*) we going back to nature in our clothes as well as our meals?

MRS. W. Why, of course. Betty has to have those for her school play. She says she has to look feline.

BETTY, *the daughter of the family, is an attractive, seventeen-year-old schoolgirl. But as she enters the room this morning, she is not* BETTY WILSON, *she is the leading lady in her big scene. She lunges towards her mother with a tiger-like ferocity as she delivers one of the lines from her school play.*

BETTY "So! It's the law of the jungle now—tooth and claw. Well, here's to the woman with the sharpest claws." (*Coming down to earth with a bump*) Morning, Mum.

WILSON What on earth are you saying? I won't have your mother talked to like that.

(*Betty's method of having breakfast is to collect an odd bit of fruit or a cup of coffee and retire with it to the couch*)

BETTY Oh, Daddy, it's the play, "The Law of the Jungle". That's the title. Polly and I have a fight in the third act, and oh, boy! it's dramatic. Wait till you see it.

MRS. W. What a stupid play to do at school. (*To Betty*) Dear, it's no use your coming home to lunch. I am so busy I can't possibly prepare anything.

BETTY Shall I take sandwiches, Mum?

MRS. W. Sandwiches again! I can't bear the thought of them. (*To Wilson*) Dear, you'll have to give Betty some money for lunch.

WILSON (*Preoccupied with the paper*) What's that?

BETTY Money for lunch, please, Dad. (*She holds out an open*

hand with mechanical precision as he supplies the needed amount)

WILSON Nobody seems to eat here any more, and I must say I don't blame them.

MRS. W. Richard, I wish you'd talk to Dick today before he goes back to college. He's been so queer and moody lately. You know, half the time I haven't the least idea what's going on in his head.

WILSON You can probably thank God for that. You'd worry much more if you did. No, Louise, you talk to him. I've got serious business to think of today—some most important meetings—we're trying to get production rolling, our union contract is coming up for renewal and, as if that weren't enough, we may have another strike on our hands.

BETTY (*Looks up from an absorbed study of her part in the play*) A strike? Oh, Dad, how thrilling!

WILSON That's what you think. (*Returns moodily to the paper*)

BETTY (*Crosses over to the window seat*) Will they have the police out with tear gas, like last winter?

MRS. W. Be quiet, Betty!

BETTY (*In her best dramatic manner*) I know—the strikers surround the house. The situation looks ugly. I go to the window. I fling it open. I stand there . . . Oh, Mum, what'll I wear?

MRS. W. Betty!

BETTY There is a hush. I say: "Men, I know my father is a hard man, but if you'd only . . ."

WILSON Betty, sit down. (*But Betty's performance was so vivid, he can't resist one look out of the window in case the men really are there*)

BETTY Oh, Dad! I was only fooling!

WILSON I tell you, that girl's got glamour on the brain. And look at this. (*Reads a telegram*) Rankine says the men

object to the new piece rates. And who insisted we put that clause into the contract? The Government!

MRS. W. Yes, yes, dear.

WILSON I tell you it just isn't worth doing business, with the Government hounding you on one side, and fellows like Rankine on the other. It'd serve 'em both right if we shut down and quit.

MRS. W. (*Her mind far away*) Do you know, this room is getting dreadfully shabby. We'll have to have it all done over.

BETTY Dad, is that Rankine, Polly Rankine's father?

WILSON How should I know? I don't know if he has children or a wife.

BETTY But, Dad, don't you understand? Polly and I are acting together. She and I have that fight. Boy, can she fight? She's wonderful. Her father has something to do with unions, I'm sure.

WILSON Well, if he does, Betty, be very careful. Don't encourage her. Your friendship might be misunderstood.

MRS. W. Don't be ridiculous, Richard. They're only school friends.

WILSON I don't care what they are. I don't want a daughter of mine mixing with that crowd. They'll use everything they can against me. Besides, people may talk.

BETTY Well, let 'em talk.

WILSON That's what I used to say when I was your age, Betty.

BETTY I'm sorry I didn't know you at your best, Dad.

WILSON Now, that's enough from you.

BETTY I'm sorry, Dad. But can't you understand, Polly and I are acting together. Besides, I intend to choose my own friends and I think Polly's a swell girl.

(The front door has been opened slowly and DICK, *in crumpled dinner suit with trousers caked in mud, edges quietly into the room.* WILSON *is engrossed in his paper and* MRS. WILSON *is studying her engagement book. They do not see him.* BETTY *catches a glimpse of* DICK. DICK, *sensing that he may get by without being caught, signs hastily to* BETTY *to keep quiet)*

MRS. W. (*Without looking up*) Betty, there's something I want you to do for me after school. (DICK *is quietly moving toward the stairs.* BETTY, *fascinated, does not speak*) I want you to go to Marshall's and get me (*looks up*) . . . Betty, you're not listening.

BETTY (*Moves in closer and tries to hold her mother's attention with a hypnotic stare*) Oh! Yes! What d'you say, Mum? (DICK *now approaching the stairs signals to* BETTY *to distract her mother's attention*)

MRS. W. I told you I want you to go . . . My dear child, what's the matter? Are you ill? Don't stare like that.

BETTY No, I'm fine. (*Gets desperate, for* DICK *will soon be safe out of sight*) Say, Mum, what sort of coat shall I get to go with this skirt? Look, Mum!

MRS. W. (*Impatiently*) Yes, I know that old skirt.

BETTY Yes, but I want you to look at it in this light. Please, Mum, it's very important.
(*She signals frantically to* DICK *with her left hand*)

MRS. W. My dear child! (*But alas!* BETTY *has forgotten her father who has been aroused by all this from his paper and, swinging round in his chair, just sees the last of* DICK'S *figure retreating up the stairs*)

WILSON (*Yells*) Stay where you are. (*He rises, clutching the first thing that comes to hand, which happens to be a spoon. He is ready to repel a burglar*) Don't you move, or I'll . . .

(MRS. W. *screams.* DICK *tumbles back down a few stairs and faces*

his family. If you had seen DICK *setting out the previous night in his dinner clothes, you'd have probably thought him a likeable, typical, well-to-do, college boy. Now his charm and his manners are quite as rumpled as his suit)*

MRS. W. Dick!

BETTY Oh, he almost made it!

DICK (*Makes the best of an undignified entrance*) You little fool! You call yourself an actress!

BETTY (*Outraged*) I like that!

WILSON (*Struggling to control himself*) Will you be quiet and give us an explanation of this outrageous conduct?

MRS. W. Dick, you don't mean to say you've been out all night?

BETTY I think it's disgusting. I'm sorry I even tried to protect you. (*Sulks*)

WILSON Where have you been?

DICK (*Removing his wet and muddy shoes, tries to be off-hand*) If you want to know, I've been sleeping in the car. And all I can say is, it's time we got a new one.

WILSON You can't put me off like that! I want an explanation.

DICK All right! I was out in the car, somewhere out in the suburbs near North Greencote.

WILSON And who, may I ask, gave you permission to use MY car?

DICK I had to take someone home.

MRS. W. (*Quickly on the alert*) So, there was someone with you in the car?

DICK (*In an exaggerated, off-hand manner*) Yes, Mother. There was; it was a lady, to be exact.

MRS. W. (*Outraged*) Well!

DICK As I was about to say, we had a little difficulty. Some

crazy drunk guy was rocketing down the road and I had to go into the ditch to miss him. Nothing serious. When I couldn't get the car started again, I took the lady home on foot. I'm sorry to disappoint you, Mother—there were no sordid details.

MRS. W. I'm sure I don't know what you mean.

DICK It was all very romantic, I assure you. You ought to try it sometime, Betty, walking through the mud in an evening gown and high heels. Jean went barefoot most of the way, when I wasn't carrying her.

WILSON That's enough of that stuff. Get on with the story.

DICK Well, after I took Jean home I walked back and tried to sleep in that damned car.

WILSON My car, I suppose you mean? And this morning?

DICK Well, I didn't feel like carrying the car home too. So this morning I thumbed my way back as far as the market. And from there I walked home to join my *dear* family for breakfast. *Now* are you satisfied?

WILSON Satisfied! What I want to know is, where's my car?

DICK Don't get excited about it. I've sent a tow car out after it, and it'll be fixed in no time. Anyway, it's only a mud-guard. (*Yawning*) It's nothing serious.

(*All the rising annoyance of the morning bursts in one final explosion*)

WILSON Nothing serious! Here I am with business to attend to, business of national importance, and what do I find? No breakfast. No co-operation. My car stolen and wrecked—my daughter making a fool of me behind my back—my son sneaking in like a common thief—and you tell me there's nothing serious! I tell you, I'm through with it—through with the whole lot of you! (*He flings his napkin on the table and storms upstairs*)

DICK Gosh, what's biting him? (*Though he knows all too well*)

MRS. W. Well, Dick, I must say you were rather careless. What on earth were you two doing ?

BETTY He just needs four hands, that's all.

MRS. W. What do you mean?

BETTY So he can use two to drive with.

DICK Do you want me to knock your block off ?

BETTY Do you want me to tell what happened that night I hid in the back of the car ?

DICK You better keep your . . . (*He is chasing her around the table just as* WILSON *comes downstairs with his hat and coat and goes out of the front door.* DICK *tries to catch his father's attention as he goes*) Dad . . . I . . . (*But the door slams in his face*)

MRS. W. (*Breaking an unhappy pause*) That's one less in the house anyway. Dick, when are you leaving ?

DICK When I can find a shirt, I guess. I couldn't find a darn one yesterday.

MRS. W. Surely you can find *one*, dear. You can pick up the rest when you come Friday.

DICK As a matter of fact, Mum, I may not be able to make it Friday.

BETTY But, Dick, you promised. You can cut your classes. You've done it before. Oh Dick! It's the last night of the play and I told all the kids you'd be there.

DICK Oh, that's a lot of high-school stuff! I don't see why you send me to college if you want me home all the time.

MRS. W. Neither do I. You were far more sensible before you went.

DICK Okay, Mum. Okay, just skip it.

MRS. W. (*She must make one effort to get him to talk*) Dick, I don't know what's got into you lately. Is there anything on your mind, dear ?

DICK (*Closing up automatically*) No.

MRS. W. Are you quite happy?

DICK Yes. Of course I am.

MRS. W. (*She comes closer and tries her most maddeningly confidential manner*) Sure there's nothing you want to tell me? You know, your mother's still your best friend, dear.

DICK (*Shaking himself free*) Oh, yes, Mother, I know! But gosh, I wish you people would leave me alone! First Dad, and now you, keep *hounding* me all the time.

MRS. W. Don't be absurd. I'm only trying to help you.

DICK I don't want to be *helped*.

MRS. W. Very well, if that's the way you feel about it, there's nothing more to be said. But please remember, your mother wants you home by an early train Friday. I've a very busy weekend and I shall need your help. Goodness knows what your father will be doing, with all these ridiculous conferences. (*But* DICK *has by now long stopped listening, and is absorbed in the telegram which is still lying on the table*)

DICK (*He is suddenly serious*) Mum, is there going to be a bust-up at the plant?

MRS. W. How should I know? The men are so unreasonable. The government has pampered them till they're just spoilt and indulgent. Your father's tried to explain it to me, but I'm sure I can't follow all their ridiculous demands. Betty, that reminds me. You must take my green dress to be dyed.

DICK But it's serious.

MRS. W. Of course it's serious. That awful green makes me look bilious.

DICK Mother, I mean the strike.

MRS. W. Oh, the strike!—well, they come and they go—that's all you can say.

DICK Yes, but this is gonna be different. And besides, there's more ways than one of forcing their demands.

MRS. W. What do you mean?

DICK Why, slow-downs, threats of violence, walk-outs, anything could happen. I've seen some darn tough-looking customers around the plant these days.

MRS. W. Let's not talk about these things, Dick. It makes me quite ill even to think about them. Why they can't all get on at the plant like one big family, I don't know. (*Collecting the letters on the table*)

BETTY That's just the trouble. They do. (*She goes upstairs to get ready for school*)

DICK (*Seriously*) Say, Mom—

MRS. W. Now what? (*She is tired of the whole subject*)

DICK I'm kinda worried about Dad.

MRS. W. Why?

DICK I don't know. Just the way he's been acting lately. Breakfast this morning was a swell send off for a guy who's got a strike on his hands.

MRS. W. Well, you know whose fault that was.

DICK Oh, don't let's go into all that again! But the point is, Dad looks like he's rarin' for a fight. You'd better tell him to go easy on those guys. It's really up to you. Don't let him do some fool thing that will land him in a tough spot.

MRS. W. Well, none of you ever listen to anything I say, so what good would it do ?

DICK (*It's no use—she'll never understand*) Okay. Skip it. Well, anyway, don't expect me Friday till you see me. And by the way (*patiently*) if I asked you very sweetly, would you tell me (*ferociously*) where the hell is a shirt ? (*Doorbell rings.* DICK *goes to answer, shoes in hand*)

MRS. W. Come back, Dick. Don't go to the door like that.

(DICK *throws his shoes down in the middle of the room and goes to the door*)

VOICE Oh, hello! Is Betty here ?

DICK Yeah, won't you come in? Excuse my get-up. It's been a sort of a late night for me, I'm afraid.

(POLLY RANKINE, *a dark, rather intense young girl of 17, her school books under her arm, a reserved and slightly hostile look on her face, comes into the house*)

POLLY Oh, that's all right ! I thought you were the butler or something.

MRS. W. (*She is automatically patronising*) Good morning, Polly. Richard, this is Polly Rankine, a little friend of Betty's. Betty will be here in a minute. Just sit down. (*Calling*) Betty, Polly's here.

BETTY (*Off stage*) I'll be right down, Poll !

MRS. W. (*With a vague summary of the morning to date*) Things are just a little upside down this morning. (*She goes to the kitchen. There is an awkward pause.* DICK *eats an apple*)

POLLY I met your old man coming down the road. He sure looked burned up about something.

DICK He is !

POLLY Why, what's the matter ?

DICK Oh, I don't know ! Thank goodness I'm leaving today, anyway.

POLLY Going back to college ?

DICK Yeah. Back to the old grind.

POLLY I'm not so sure I want to go to college.

DICK What do you want to do ?

POLLY Work along with my pop.

DICK Good Lord ! That's what I'm trying to avoid.

POLLY Why ?

DICK Oh, I don't know! He's old, I guess. The world's changing and he doesn't know it. What's your Dad do?

POLLY Organising labour in this town.

DICK Is that so? (*Suddenly sitting up*) What! He's not Jim Rankine?

POLLY Yes, why?

DICK Gee, I'd like to meet him. (*Now he is all enthusiasm*)

POLLY Would you? Why?

DICK Well, I've been studying all about labour relations in college. I'm darned interested in labour.

POLLY I don't think my Pop's got much use for your kind of interest.

DICK A guy's got to study, hasn't he? Besides, I'd like to talk to him about this trouble at the plant.

POLLY (*Suddenly grim*) I wouldn't do that, if I were you.

DICK Something's got to be done. I happened to be passing the plant this morning when the men were coming off the night shift. Boy, some of those guys looked as though they could act darn tough.

POLLY Maybe they saw the boss's son coming home from his night shift. Do you wonder they're bitter?

DICK Good gravy, it doesn't have anything to do with me, does it?

POLLY Doesn't it?

DICK (*Pause*) Hell, it's all such a lousy mess. Sometimes I wish I could start all over again, and . . .

POLLY Well?

DICK Well, do something about it.

POLLY Yeah, what?

(*But* BETTY, *bouncing down the stairs, relieves him of the necessity of answering*)

BETTY Hi, Polly ! What's new ? I hope my brother isn't boring you. How's the part coming ?

POLLY Oh, it's awful! I've been trying to go through it all morning. But Pop's been storming around the house since six, 'phoning all over town about a meeting.

BETTY My Dad's just as bad. This place is a madhouse half the time. If only they'd all shut up and give us a little peace once in a while. Say, Polly, you know that part where we have the fight . . .

POLLY Yeah ? (*By this time they are out of the door and we needn't listen to more*)

DICK (*With a sense of foreboding*) Hmmm, a little peace,—I wonder . . . .

(*He chucks a grape into the empty fireplace to express his disgust with things in general and limps painfully towards the stairs*)

CURTAIN

ACT I, SCENE II

It is the following Friday, and another breakfast. MRS. WILSON, *in a different negligèe, has been preparing an extremely sketchy meal but seems to have the situation in hand.* BETTY, *as she comes down the stairs, is still lost in the triumphs of last night's performance of her school play.*

BETTY Good morning, Mum. Gee, it was wonderful!

MRS. W. What was wonderful?

BETTY Why, last night, of course.

MRS. W. Oh, yes! How did you get on ?

BETTY (*Dreamily*) Oh, Mum, it's a real success! It's the best school play we've ever done. My, it's thrilling to be an actress. And would you believe it, Mum, we had six curtain calls. Oh boy, it was great !

MRS. W. (*This may go on indefinitely, and she has her day to plan*) Let me see. Bridge at the Jennings' at 4 o'clock—and then for lunch I've invited some of the women from the Red Cross . . .

BETTY (*Unperturbed*) It'll go over bigger still tonight 'cause we won't be so scared. They'll probably call for you and Dad—parents of the leading lady, you know. Dad'll have to make a speech. The fathers generally do.

MRS. W. Betty, I'm very much afraid your father and I may not be at the play tonight.

BETTY What d'you mean, Mum ?

MRS. W. Well, I'm extremely busy—and I'm afraid your father is quite ill with worry about all the trouble at the plant.

BETTY (*She is really disappointed, and means her mother to know it*) I'm sick to death of the whole business. Polly says it's just the same at her house. Why don't they settle the darned thing ?

MRS. W. That's what we all wonder.

BETTY But this is awful. I bet Dick will back out and I won't have anyone there to see me. All the other kids have someone. (*She is in tears*)

MRS. W. Now, Betty, don't make such a fuss. All this play-acting just seems to go to your head. Besides, here's a letter from Dick. He says he may be able to come after all.

BETTY (*Eagerly*) Does he say so, Mum ?

MRS. W. It doesn't sound a bit like Dick. He seems quite anxious to see us all.

(*Dick suddenly comes in by the front door, suitcase in hand. From the moment he enters you see that something has happened to him. There is a spring and a warmth, and a perfectly genuine eagerness to see his family*)

DICK Hello, everyone!

BETTY Dick . . . how on earth d'you get here so early ?

DICK Hi, beautiful ! (*With an affectionate grin, he slams his hat down on her head*) Hi, Mom! It's good to see you. (*He kisses her warmly*)

MRS. W. My dear boy, is anything wrong?

DICK You said to come by the early train, didn't you ?

MRS. W. Yes, but I didn't mean you to get up in the middle of the night.

DICK Well, I thought you might want me to drive you around or something. How's the play Betty ? Seen the story in the papers ?

BETTY About me ?

DICK And how! Look at that!

BETTY No, let's see.

(DICK *gives her part of the paper.* BETTY *grabs it and devours it on the couch*)

DICK (*To his mother*) Say, Dad's in the paper too, on the front page. Picture and everything. (*Reading*) "Will not budge", and there's a picture of Jim Rankine, the union leader.

MRS. W. On the front page! (*She takes the paper*) I didn't know he looked so young. "Men coming off the night shift marched in a body to the Union Headquarters. There are threats of a walkout and plans have already been made to picket the plant. But interviewed last night, Governor Crump stated the situation was well in hand" . . . I wonder if there are any sales this morning.

(*In the course of this,* WILSON, *in bathrobe and pyjamas and looking worn and sleepless, has come downstairs*)

WILSON (*Smouldering*) Let me see that paper.

MRS. W. (*Soothing*) Richard!

WILSON (*Erupting*) Give me that paper. (*She does so, rumpling it up in a way calculated to infuriate*)

DICK Morning, Dad. Aren't you going to say hello?

WILSON Yes, yes, hello, my boy, how are you? What's it say? (*Preoccupied*) Anything personal?

DICK No, it's okay. Only a picture. I don't think anybody'll recognise you anyway. Pretty swell, isn't it, Sis? All set for the big night?

BETTY (*Radiant*) Are you going to be there?

DICK Why sure! What d'you think I came for? Not every guy's got a sister in the big lights.

BETTY Jeepers, Dick! What's happened to you? You're sure different.

DICK Go ahead, go ahead, read it. Listen, Mom !

BETTY Listen to this everybody. " Outstanding performances by the girls of the cast were those of Miss Betty Wilson as the leading lady and Miss Polly Rankine in the part of the jungle tigress who . . ."

WILSON What's that ?

BETTY " Polly Rankine in the part of the . . ."

WILSON Rankine—Rankine—why can't they leave me alone ? The fellow even uses his daughter to get at me. (*He walks over and snatches the paper out of her hands*)

BETTY (*Furious*) Dad, you can't say a thing like that! That's terribly unfair.

MRS. W. Be quiet, Betty. (*With sweetness and light*) Richard, why don't you go upstairs and rest ? (*She goes to the kitchen*)

WILSON (*Muttering*) Rest!

DICK (*Very warm and friendly*) Dad, how are things making out—at the plant, I mean ?

WILSON Oh, now they're sending an expert down from Washington! Expert! Bungling bureaucrat! Everybody seems to want to run my business. I sometimes wish I could!

DICK But what about the men tho', Dad ? Are things improving with them ?

WILSON I don't know, Dick. Sometimes I get damn mad with those fellows. They seem to think all I've got to do is to sit around and listen to their demands. Don't they realise this is a national emergency ? Why, I've got to step up production, satisfy seventeen different bureaus, keep the shareholders happy—yes, and plan how to keep those same fellows on the payroll. Don't they realise we've all got to make some sacrifices ? However . . . if we keep our heads and hold on, we'll come out on top all right.

DICK How about this fellow Rankine ?

WILSON He's the leader of the men, damn his hide. (*He is eating his breakfast and vents his feelings on an apple*)

DICK What kind of a guy is he anyway?

WILSON Crooked and pigheaded like all the rest of that bunch.

DICK I know, but as a man, what's he like? In ordinary life I mean?

WILSON How should I know? I never met him in ordinary life.

DICK Couldn't you make friends with him?

WILSON What do you mean?

DICK Well, take him to a ball game or something.

WILSON Look here, Dick, I'm not in a mood for joking.

DICK I'm not joking. I'm serious. Say, Dad, you know the Carters who live just off campus? He runs the big department store in town.

WILSON I ought to. We played three years of college football together.

DICK His son's in my class. Gee, they're a swell family. They have a wonderful time together. They have the usual rows, I guess, but they know how to work them out together, instead of just jumping on each other when things go wrong.

WILSON I daresay the *Carter* children don't need to be jumped on, as you call it.

DICK Could be. Anyway, I was over at their house the other night. I met some swell friends of theirs. Gosh, we had a fascinating evening! They gave me a whole new angle on things. I stayed there half the night talking about what's wrong with the world and what we could do about it.

WILSON Yes, son, I know. We all talk that way at college. I did when I was your age. But this is life—hard, practical

life. You learn in time there's only one way to stop the other fellow knocking you and that's to knock him first and knock him hard.

BETTY That's it, Dad. The law of the jungle.

WILSON Well, I suppose if you like to put it that way, that's what it is. It isn't pretty, but then this isn't a pretty world.

DICK I know what you mean, Dad. All this college talk isn't any good. That stuff doesn't get you anywhere. But these people weren't just college guys. They were hard-headed, practical business men like you, Dad, labour fellows, all sorts. Their idea is to get rid of selfishness. They say that's where all the trouble begins.

MRS. W. (*She has come in quietly during the last sentences*) Now isn't that just what I've always said?

DICK Okay, Mom, but here's the catch. Where's the place to begin?

MRS. W. Where, indeed?

DICK Why, right here. How can you change a world that's selfish as hell when you're selfish as hell yourself?

MRS. W. Darling! I don't see any need to be profane about it.

DICK No; but look, Mom, suppose a guy gets tired of waiting for the other fellow to change, and starts in with a bit of changing himself—says he's sorry, for instance?

BETTY But why on earth say you're sorry—unless you have to?

DICK Look—I suppose most times when you're in a mess, it's partly your own fault, isn't it?

BETTY Don't be silly, Dick. Dad can't just walk up to Mr. Rankine and say, "I'm sorry!"

WILSON Exactly. Those theories are all very fine, but where would we be in business if we started that kind of thing?

DICK Well, where *are* you?

WILSON (*Exasperated*) I know, Dick, but it isn't practical.

DICK (*He decides to take a plunge*) Well, I guess it's up to me to try to make it practical, then. You remember about the car the other day, Dad—er—

WILSON I certainly do!

DICK (*With a great effort—awkwardly*) Well, I lied to you. There wasn't any other car at all. Jean and I had had a couple of drinks. A few more than a couple. As a matter of fact we were acting kind of crazy, sort of driving together—just a couple of saps not fit to drive a car. That's when I went off the road. I just wanted to say I'm sorry, Dad, about the whole business. (*Pause*) And if you'll let me I'd like to help out with the bill.

WILSON (*Unbending considerably*) All right, son, if you feel that way about it. You had me worried, I'll admit. But so long as you're honest with me about these things . . .

DICK (*Sits—genuinely relieved*) Gee, that's swell of you, Dad! Say, that's a load off my mind.

WILSON Well, Dick, I must say I feel a bit better myself.

DICK Didn't think that you'd understand.

WILSON I was a young fellow too, you know, once.

BETTY Gee, Dad, what did you do ?

DICK I bet he had a good time, anyway, didn't you, Dad ?

WILSON Well—not in the way you fellows call a good time nowadays. I had to come up the hard way, you know.

DICK Yeah, but you felt you were getting somewhere.

WILSON Yes . . . . Yes, I did. When I got my first job, Dick, I thought I was sitting on top of the world. And then one day I became President of the Company. I had some great plans. Why, I used to come down to the office and go through the plant every morning! I knew everyone. " Hello, Tom ", " How ya, Bob ". It was just like a family. But nowadays . . . (*all the enthusiasm goes out like a deflating*

balloon) I don't know. Somehow there just isn't any fun in business any more.

DICK (*Pause*) You know, Dad, when you were so swell about the car just now, I wondered how this fellow Rankine would feel if someone were to say " sorry " to him.

WILSON Good lord! I haven't smashed his car!

DICK No, but you've probably smashed his feelings, or his plans, or his self-respect—or he thinks so, anyway. Suppose you were to go to him and say—" Look, Rankine, can't we get together . . ."

WILSON You don't understand, Dick. These are delicate negotiations.

DICK Well, say it privately, then. I know, why don't we have him over for a meal? Dad—you'll never agree with a man you don't see.

WILSON There are certain compromises in life . . . (*But the speech is never made, for without a knock or a bell the front door opens and* POLLY *runs in. She is tense with misery. She rushes straight over to* BETTY)

POLLY Betty—Betty !

BETTY Polly, what's the matter ? (WILSON *is glad to get out and goes upstairs*)

POLLY It's all off—the play and everything. I've left school.

BETTY What do you mean ?

POLLY Pop's taking me away. I've got to get a job, earn my own living. I'm ushering at the Palace—two to ten—starting today.

BETTY But you can't today! The play!

POLLY I know, but I've got to, Pop says, or I may not get the job.

BETTY (*Shocked and reproachful*) Polly, you can't! You're

letting us all down. You know no one else can do the part properly. Why don't you explain to your Dad?

POLLY Explain! You don't know my Pop. As he is now you might as well explain to a tiger. He's mad. He doesn't want me at school—says they're a lot of damned snobs.

MRS. W. Polly! You forget yourself!

POLLY (*Getting wilder*) Well, he's right. Why should I act with a lot of snobs and sissies who think they own the place? I'm glad I'm through with the whole business. I hate the lot of you.

(*Turns away in rage—half crying—kicks the chair.* BETTY *comes and tries to put her arm around her.* POLLY *shakes her off*)

MRS. W. What an exhibition! (*She goes to the kitchen*)

BETTY Gosh—Poll—

DICK (*Quietly to Betty*) Lemme talk to her.

DICK Polly, I'm sorry about this. I know a lot of what you just said is true.

POLLY You're just as bad as the rest.

DICK I know it.

POLLY Well, then, do something.

DICK I know, but what? That's what I've been wondering all week. I'd give anything if I could help.

POLLY Oh, that's just a lot of talk! But talk is cheap. I'm sick of it.

DICK So am I, Polly. I know just how you feel about this thing. I've been doing a heck of a lot of thinking about the mess down at the plant, and about the mess all over the world. Then there were some things happened at college this week. I saw I've got some fighting to do right here, fighting to make this country a worth . . .

POLLY (*Turning on him fiercely*) Fighting! You don't even know what fighting means! I came down past the factory. There were crowds of people there. And police with guns.

(*Growing more and more hysterical*) They're going to kill us—all us workers. They'll kill my father. And what do you care ? You've never done a decent thing in your life—never gone hungry or done an honest day's work—just chase around town half tight with a different girl every week. I've seen you—and all the time your father's living off us, and so are you—and you, too, Betty. Boy, I hate you! I wish I'd really scratched out your eyes in that crazy play. (*To* DICK) Don't stand there looking like that. If you've got any guts, DO SOMETHING! *DO SOMETHING !*

(*She runs out of the front door.* DICK *does not move. He stands motionless, thinking—as the curtain falls*)

CURTAIN

ACT II, SCENE I

It is the same morning, but a very different room with a very different view. In fact, about all you can see through the two windows are factory chimneys and the walls of high apartment buildings blocking out the sunlight. The horse-hair couch and wooden rocking chair belong to a family who have been through hard times. The front door is on one side of the room and the kitchen door on the other. There is a shelf of modern books on current affairs, a globe in one corner, and a large map of the United States hangs on the back wall. MRS. RANKINE *is setting the table for breakfast, as* BOBBY, *her twelve-year-old, comes in from his newspaper round.* MRS. RANKINE *is a faithful wife and mother who keeps going outwardly, though has long given up inwardly. Everything about her, her clothes, her hair, her manner, is tired and faded.* BOBBY, *on the other hand, who has inherited her natural loyalty and soundness, is also still full of energy and bounce. He is in his usual morning rush, between his newspaper round and school. He flings his spare papers down on the couch and searches around for his books.*

BOBBY Hiyah, Mom!

MRS. R. Hello, dear!

BOBBY I've finished my route. Hey, Mom, have you seen my books anywhere?

MRS. R. Your books, dear—they're over there. Come and have some breakfast.

BOBBY (*Hunger gets the best of punctuality*) Gee, I'm hungry! What've you got? I could eat ham and eggs.

MRS. R. Sorry, dear, that's our supper. Your father says we've got to cut down a bit. This thing may last a long time.

(Knock at the door. Enter JOE BUSH, *a forceful, rather good-looking fellow, with open shirt and leather jacket. He doesn't bother to remove his hat or his cigarette, and his tone from the start is patronising and insolent)*

BUSH Morning, Mrs. Rankine. Jim not up yet, I see.

MRS. R. Well, Joe Bush. What do you want?

BUSH *(To* BOBBY) Hello, sonny boy! *(To* MRS. R.) I just dropped in to see how Jim was feeling this morning.

MRS. R. How should I know? I never see him.

BUSH If you ask me, Mrs. Rankine, that man of yours has got more on his hands than he can handle. Better keep an eye on him.

MRS. R. *(She has to ger it off her chest)* Keep an eye on him? How can I? He never takes time for a decent meal. He's out first thing in the morning and doesn't get back till all hours of the night.

BUSH Well, I can understand that. *(He makes himself at home in the rocker)*

MRS. R. What do you mean?

BUSH *(With meaning)* If you'd seen Jim where I saw him last night . . .

BOBBY Where was Pop last night, Mom?

MRS. R. *(Emphatic)* Your Pop was at a meeting. *(To* BUSH) You know that. *(To* BOBBY) Go on—eat your breakfast.

BUSH That's right. Your Pop was at a meeting. But there are meetings and meetings, you know.

MRS. R. What are you driving at?

BUSH Now, then, Mrs. Rankine, take it easy. After all, a fellow who works as hard as Jim has a right to a little fun on the side now and then.

BOBBY What's he mean, Mom?

BUSH (*With sudden steel*) Just this, sonny. Your Pop's got a big job on his hands . . . too big a job, maybe. Right now he needs all the friends he can get. (*To* MRS. R.) Now all I want, Mrs. Rankine, is to show Jim who his real friends are. (JIM RANKINE, *a cigarette in his mouth, has entered—a drawn, hungry-looking man, with a sensitive face, marks of real ability, but hard and strained. He has a nervous, quick nature, alternating from a quiet menacing manner to moments of intense violence*)

RANKINE Who my real friends are, eh?

BUSH (*Blustering*) Hiyah, Jim! Hiyah, big boy!

RANKINE Well, what do you want?

BUSH The men are getting restless.

RANKINE They'll wait for instructions.

BUSH Not if they have to wait too long.

RANKINE Not if you can turn them against their union leaders, you mean.

BUSH Now look, Jim. We may not see eye to eye in everything, but we've got a lot in common.

RANKINE Come on, Bush. Come to the point.

BUSH Well, Jim, I got a new line on Wilson. (*He moves a little apart from the family and Jim instinctively follows him*)

RANKINE Okay.

BUSH Cut out all this business about negotiations—Pull the boys out tonight.

RANKINE (*Cuts in sharply*) All right, Bush; I'm handling this situation.

BUSH Yeah? Well, I just might be able to sell the boys the idea you haven't got what it takes to handle it.

RANKINE You might, eh? Here's your hat—get going.

BUSH (*A furious ultimatum*) Okay, Rankine. Okay. But don't say I didn't warn you. (*He throws down his cigarette, gets*

right to the door with his hand on the handle) Oh! and sonny, sometime get your old man to tell you about some of his meetings. (*And he goes before Jim hits him*)

BOBBY What's the matter with that guy ?

MRS. R. Now go on, finish your milk.

RANKINE (*Taking it out on her*) What was he trying to sell you ?

MRS. R. Nothing.

RANKINE Come on. Out with it.

MRS. R. I tell you, nothing.

RANKINE Yeah ?

MRS. R. Well, if you must know, he said I'd better keep an eye on you.

RANKINE You don't mean to tell me you fell for that old line.

MRS. R. Of course not. (*In spite of herself*) But where were you last night anyway ?

RANKINE I was at a meeting.

MRS. R. (*It bursts out faster and faster*) Honestly, Jim. I'm fed up with these meetings every night. You're never home any more.

RANKINE Now listen . . . .

MRS. R. I get sick and tired of being here by myself all the time . . . .

RANKINE Pipe down.

MRS. R. Besides, it isn't fair to the kids.

RANKINE Will you shut up ?

MRS. R. No. I won't. (*They are both yelling. The words are flung back and forth across the bent figure of* BOBBY *at the table*)

RANKINE Lil, you know how much this union means to me. And if Joe Bush has been putting ideas into your head, you get rid of them right now. Bush is only out for one thing

—to split the union. He'll do anything he can to get me out so his friends can take over. You know that, Lil.

MRS. R. Yes, Jim, but I . . .

RANKINE Never mind the buts. Just remember this. Joe Bush is barking up the wrong tree, both here and with the boys down at the plant. Do you believe that or don't you ?

MRS. R. Yes, I do. (*She is subdued at last. She knows it's true*)

RANKINE All right then. That's enough. And you, boy, keep your eyes peeled and your mouth shut, see ? Now give me some of that coffee, Lil.

BOBBY (*To break a long and awkward silence*) There sure was a big crowd down the street by the Union Headquarters this morning when I went by. Some of them were calling for you, Pop.

RANKINE Well, let 'em call. They'll be madder if they have to wait.

BOBBY Are you going to talk to 'em, Pop ?

RANKINE I am. I'm going to talk to 'em till I'm hoarse in the throat. I'm going to talk to 'em till they're so roaring mad that the Mayor and the Governor and the police and old man Wilson—and the whole damned bunch of them listen to what we gotta say.

BOBBY (*Carried away by it all*) That's it, Pop. Hit 'em good and hard. (*And he bangs the table to make the cups rattle*)

MRS. R. Jim, don't let the boy talk like that.

RANKINE Why shouldn't he ? Why in the name of thunder shouldn't he ? He's in it too. I'd be through with him, if he wasn't a fighter like his Pop.

MRS. R. But he's so young.

RANKINE Catch 'em young—train 'em young. Why not ? . . . (*Pause*) So they were calling for your Pop, eh ?

BOBBY Some of them were.

RANKINE And more of 'em will—and more—and more. Lil, you don't know where this fight's going to take me. This thing today is just a beginning.

MRS. R. Oh, Jim, I'm scared!

RANKINE Scared, eh! No guts. No fight. If you had any you'd have left me long ago.

MRS. R. No, Jim, I'd never leave you.

RANKINE (*Ruthless*) But I'd leave you and the kids if you got in my way, see? I got a job to do and that comes first. (*To* BOBBY) Here, you ain't scared of your Pop, are you?

BOBBY (*With much hesitation*) Nope.

RANKINE There's a fighter. There's a chip off the old block. Tell me, what do they say about us at school, eh? What do they say?

BOBBY One teacher said you were out for justice, Pop.

RANKINE She did, did she? And she was right. Justice, equality, and the brotherhood of all mankind. That's what we're fighting for. You tell 'em, see?

BOBBY What's brotherhood, Pop?

(JIM *starts—takes cigarette out of mouth. For the first time that day he is caught without an answer at the tip of his tongue*)

RANKINE (*Pause*) You get along. Can't sit around here all day.

BOBBY So long, Mom.

MRS. R. Got everything, dear? Got your apple? (JIM *is cleaning an apple on the sleeve of his coat—she snatches it out of his hand*)

RANKINE Go on—

MRS. R. Look both ways when you cross the street.

BOBBY Yes, Mom. G'bye. (*He goes*)

(MRS. R. *looks lovingly after him down the road. Then she turns back to her husband and her face freezes again*)

RANKINE Give me some of that coffee. (*His face is buried in*

the paper) It's the old game, Lil. Labour's got to make the sacrifices. What do the bosses think we've been making for the last ten years? Fortunes? We've sacrificed in the past all right.

MRS. R. (*Completely toneless*) Yes, Jim.

RANKINE If they think just because the war's over they can sell us down the river again, well, they've got another think coming, that's all.

MRS. R. Yes, Jim.

RANKINE But, look, Lil, we'll have to cut down on everything. (*Lights another cigarette*) Food, clothes—everything. This may be a long fight. If the men have to suffer, we'll suffer with 'em.

MRS. R. Yes, Jim. I was worrying a bit about Bobby's extra milk. The doctor wanted especially . . .

RANKINE It'll have to go. He's got to learn to go without like the rest. He'll need more than milk before he's through. (*She picks up his cigarettes and throws them back on the table*)

MRS. R. Then, Polly. . . she needs new things for school.

RANKINE I've taken care of all that. I've taken her out of school.

MRS. R. (*Horrified*) You've what?

RANKINE She knows all they can teach her.

MRS. R. But, Jim . . .

RANKINE My God, woman! Don't you know what I've got on my hands?

MRS. R. But, Jim, her play . . .

RANKINE Play, Lil . . . (*rises*) This is war, not play. Besides, I'm fed up with school, with their plays, and parties and God knows what. Seem to teach 'em everything except how to think and how to work. I'd a darn sight sooner see my daughter learning what it's like to be a worker

than making a public exhibition of herself with a lot of stuck-up fools like Wilson's girl.
(*Knock at the door*)

RANKINE That's one of the men. (*Shouting*) Well? What do you want?

VOICE (*Outside*) May I speak to you a minute, Mr. Rankine?

RANKINE You can tell the boys I'll be down later. I've got a lot of work on my hands here before I can leave.

VOICE (*Still outside*) I'm Dick Wilson, Mr. Rankine. I'd like to talk to you.

RANKINE Who?

DICK Dick Wilson, Mr. Richard Wilson's son. (*Opens door*)

RANKINE Who sent you to spy around here?

DICK No one sent me. I came on my own.

RANKINE Well, get the hell out of here on your own. (*Slams door*)

DICK (*Outside the closed door*) I wanted to say that I was sorry.

RANKINE Sorry? Say, what's the game? You won't get anything this way.

DICK I'm not asking for anything.

RANKINE Well, what do you want?

DICK As a matter of fact I'd like to come in, if I can.
(*Jim is baffled. He looks at Lil for some kind of support. She nods her head*)

RANKINE All right, then. Make it snappy, I haven't any time to waste. (*He lets* DICK *in*, DICK *sees* MRS. RANKINE *the other side of the room and goes to her with a smile*)

DICK How do you do, Mrs. Rankine? I'm Dick Wilson. Excuse me for coming so early. But I didn't think I'd find you both in at any other time.

MRS. R. (*Overawed*) I'm sure you're welcome, Mr. Wilson. Won't you sit down?

RANKINE Leave this to me, Lil. I'll handle this.
(MRS. R. *goes into the kitchen*)

RANKINE (*Pause*) See here, Wilson, I don't trust you.

DICK I don't blame you, Mr. Rankine. I've never done anything much to make you want to trust me.

RANKINE All right, sit down. . . . Start talking.

DICK You're an American, aren't you, Mr. Rankine?

RANKINE Yeah! A damn sight better American than some of you people.

DICK Well, I'm an American too. But I've only just begun to see what that means.

RANKINE (*With deep contempt*) I think you'd better stay home and play. You may find things tougher than you bargained for.

DICK Yeah, I know what you mean! All my life I've been soft, wasting time, wasting money—just the kind of a guy to make a fellow like you see red.

RANKINE Well, so what?

DICK (*With growing conviction*) So what about America? A lot o' countries have just folded up because there were too many people in them like me, who just didn't care.

RANKINE You needn't waste your time around here talking about people who don't care.

DICK Oh, I know you care! I've been talking to some of the men, and I know what they think of you.

RANKINE Oh, you have, have you?

DICK Yes, and I've studied about the Labour Movement in College, and I know how . . .

RANKINE So you've studied about the Labour Movement in College? Now isn't that just dandy! Well, look here, sonny, while you were still in diapers and for many years before that, men fought and died for the Labour Movement

—better men than me, thank God—men with vision—men with ideals—men who put the brotherhood of man in first place. Why, they believed . . . what the heck! You wouldn't understand if I told you.

DICK I know I don't understand much about Labour, Mr. Rankine. All I do know is, were're all shot to pieces among ourselves. We've got to get together.

RANKINE If the bosses want co-operation they can have it, on the workers' terms—and you can tell that to your old man with my compliments.

DICK You know, you and my Dad are a lot alike.

RANKINE What do you mean?

DICK You sounded just like him then. "They can have co-operation on our terms." Just like he used to say to me—"You can be out until 12 o'clock, son, and not one minute later."

(*They are passable imitations of the two men and very much alike*)

RANKINE Well, and he's quite right, too.

DICK But, of course, I usually was out later.

RANKINE Well, what were you . . . (*Catches himself*) What the hell's this all about anyway?

DICK Hey! I guess I'll have to tell him about that now, too.

RANKINE Tell him? Say, what are you driving at?

DICK You see, I'm trying a new idea—telling the old man everything—being dead honest with him.

RANKINE That'd be quite a change in your family.

DICK Well, it was working fine this morning, I think. I told Dad about wrecking the car. Then we got to talking about you. I was just telling him he ought to get to know you—have you round to the house or something!

RANKINE (*Like ice*) Huh! Very nice.

DICK I was just getting somewhere with the old man, when the door burst open and in stormed Polly.

RANKINE Polly! My daughter!

DICK Yes.

RANKINE I'll wring that girl's neck.

DICK No, for gosh sakes, Mr. Rankine, don't say anything to her! Though she's really the one who got me here.

RANKINE She invited you to my house?

DICK Good Lord, no! But she was terribly upset about leaving school so suddenly, ruining the play and everything.

RANKINE Upset, was she? I'll give her something to be upset about.

DICK No, she was right—called us all a bunch of snobs and sissies—boy, she gave us hell.

RANKINE (*With a grim smile of satisfaction*) Hm. Oh, she did, did she? Well, go on. Go on.

DICK In the end she turned on me. "If you've got any guts," she said, "why don't you do something?" Gee! that made me see what a rat I was. That I had never done anything decent in my life and that I never would unless I damn well changed.

RANKINE Well?

DICK Then she ran out leaving me all alone. The family had taken cover upstairs, I guess. And I just sat there—thinking of Polly and Dad and Mom—and of you—

RANKINE Me?

DICK Yes, and of the guys down at the plant and the police and the general mess. It all seemed so hopeless—just an awful mix-up. Then I guess I quieted down. And . (*Hesitates*)

RANKINE Well?

DICK Well, it's kinda hard to explain, Mr. Rankine—a family

that I met told me about it. "If you listen," they said, "God'll speak to you." It was a new idea to me, all right. I haven't had much use for God—have you? I've found it works. When I sit quiet and listen, thoughts come into my mind—things I never would have thought of myself.

RANKINE What kind of things?

DICK Well, do you know what came into my mind this morning—clear as a flash?—"Why not go and have breakfast with Jim Rankine?"

RANKINE What a hell of a crust!

DICK Boy, did I think so! I must have walked round the block four times before I got up enough nerve to knock. But the thought kept on coming—only sort of quiet-like—with a kind of rightness about it. It seemed to calm me down. So in I came.

RANKINE Yeah! But you haven't had the breakfast.

DICK No—not yet.

RANKINE Well, I'll be darned. (*Yelling*) Lil, you'd better get him something to eat . . . .

MRS. R. (*Coming in*) Why, of course. I'll have something in just a minute.

DICK Please don't bother, Mrs. Rankine. I don't eat much anyway.

RANKINE What do you take us for? Sit down. Lil, get him some ham and eggs.

MRS. R. (*Forgetting herself*) But, Jim, didn't you say . . .

RANKINE Never mind what I said. Get him some ham and eggs. (*She goes to the kitchen*) Well, what next?

DICK I know what you must think of fellows like me.

RANKINE Oh, no you don't. Not the half of it.

DICK (*Very simple and straight*) You know I discovered I don't

have to stay that way, and I came here because I'm sorry. I want you to know that and I want to work along with you —and Dad—and the other guys, to clean up the mess I've helped to make.

MRS. R. (*Coming in*) Here's your coffee, Mr. Wilson. I'll have the rest in a minute.

RANKINE (*Tough, but almost genial*) Don't you Mr. Wilson him, Lil. He's just a bum like the rest of us. What's she to call you?

DICK Well, at home I'm just Dick.

RANKINE I guess you're just Dick around here, too.

DICK Thank you. Thank you, Mrs. Rankine.

MRS. R. (*But it's too much*) You're very welcome, Mr. Wilson! (*There's a pause while they drink coffee, watching each other over the cups*)

RANKINE Well, where do we go from here? You seem to've got this thing all figured out.

DICK Well, I don't know exactly, Mr. Rankine. But you know what you were saying earlier about vision and brotherhood and all that. I guess that's what most decent people agree is what's needed. But the real thing is how to get it.

RANKINE Yeah! how to get it! That's the catch. I've spent most of my life chasing that rainbow, and I've just about reached the conclusion that in this world you've got to knock the other guy hard before he knocks you.

DICK You know, my Dad says that too. Gee, it would be funny if you were both wrong on the one thing you agreed on.

RANKINE So your old man says that too, eh?

DICK Yeah.

RANKINE Well! He knows who's to blame.

VOICE (*An urgent shout from the street*) Jim! Jim! Open up!

(RANKINE *goes quickly to open the door*)

RANKINE (*Startled*) Good God, Mac! What's the matter? (MAC, *a big fellow in worker's clothes, comes in carrying* POLLY, *there is an ugly gash across her forehead, and she is unconscious*)

MRS. R. (*Screams*) Polly!

MAC Take it easy, Jim. One of the fellows is getting a doctor. Darned lucky I saw her, though. Make room on that couch will you? Got a cushion anywhere? (*Puts* POLLY *on the davenport*)

MRS. R. Oh, Jim!

RANKINE (*Completely rattled*) Damn it all, do something!

MRS. R. Get some water from the kitchen. (DICK *runs to get it*)

RANKINE What happened, Mac?

MAC She was in the crowd down at the plant—I saw her—shouting her head off. Never seen a kid look so wild. Yelling and swearing like one of the men. Then a fight started and the police broke in. I heard her scream, and when I looked, she'd gone. Fainted, I guess. Don't know how I found her and got her out. The old jallopy was nearby so I brought her straight here. (DICK *returns with water*)

MRS. R. Polly . . . Polly . . . It's Mum . . . (*She is behind Polly's head, dabbing at her with a damp cloth*)

RANKINE (*With burning realisation*) My own kid, Mac. She wouldn't ever have been there if I hadn't taken her out of school. My God! if anything happened to her, I'm the one that's done it.

CURTAIN

ACT II, SCENE II

The same, half an hour later. Polly *is propped up on the sofa. She is pale and has a plaster over the cut in her head. But otherwise she is unhurt.* Rankine *is in the rocking chair.* Dick *is by the table. There is silence.* Rankine *is restless—gets up—fetches the cigarettes, lights one—throws it away. He tries the coffee pot—finds it empty—goes into kitchen. His voice is heard through the door.*

Rankine Give me some of that coffee, Lil, and make it good and black .

Dick Does he ever sit still, Polly ?

Polly Not often. He's always like that when he's making up his mind about something.

Dick You think a lot of your Dad, don't you ?

Polly Sure, he's wonderful.

Dick I remember what you said about his being like a tiger. Boy! He's like a tiger in a cage.

Polly You don't have to live in the cage with him. Things are fairly wild around here sometimes.

Dick Yeah, when you both get going it must be really something!

Polly You're thinking of this morning, aren't you?—I kinda exploded.

Dick Boy, I thought a cyclone had hit our house.

Polly I guess I shouldn't have done that. After all, I guess your family can't help being different.

Dick We're not so different.

POLLY Oh yeah! It seems like everything around your place burns me up.

DICK Yeah, but there's one thing we've got in common, all the same.

POLLY What's that?

DICK Fights at home.

POLLY Do you people fight too? You all look so smug.

DICK You come round sometime, Polly! You know, my Dad's a fighter, too. More like an old bear than a tiger, though. See him sometimes sitting there in the sun, you'd think what a friendly old cuss he can be. Then something gets him . . .

POLLY Pop, for instance.

DICK Yeah, and he hits out.

POLLY And does he make the workers sore! Pop comes home and tears up the place most of the time.

DICK You know, Polly, if our two families ever get fighting on the same side, the Lord help the enemy.

POLLY That was your idea coming here, wasn't it?

DICK Well, you told me to do something, didn't you?

POLLY You must have some guts after all.

DICK This is going to take more than guts, Polly. I gotta have some help.

POLLY What do you want me to do?

DICK Help me get some place with your Dad. What's he going to do next?

POLLY You never know. Once he's got something on his mind he'll stay like this for hours—sometimes days at a time. Then, boy!—I think you'd better stick around, Dick.

DICK Yeah, but what shall I do?

POLLY I don't know. Why don't you lie low and let him talk? I think that's what he needs.

DICK Okay, Polly. That's something to go on.

POLLY You know, Dick, you'll be a swell fellow when you grow up.

DICK What the heck do you mean? What are you, anyway? You're just a mere junior in High School.

POLLY That's got nothing to do with it. Besides, you forget I quit school. I've got a job, worse luck.

(RANKINE *returns, still restless. He has a cup of coffee in his hand. He's just going to drink it, then he offers it to* POLLY, *who refuses it. He settles down in the rocking chair, ignoring the others. He again reaches for a cigarette, and offers the packet to* DICK, *who refuses*)

(*Pause*)

RANKINE This silence business gets me down!

DICK You don't relax much, do you, Jim? (*He has found a quiet poise and understanding*)

RANKINE I haven't relaxed since I had six months in hospital fifteen years ago.

DICK Where was that?

RANKINE Up in the mining country.

DICK What was wrong?

RANKINE Accident. Got a metal plate as big as that (*indicates*) in my head right now. Accident's what *they* called it—criminal negligence on the part of the management, I'd call it. Doctors said I'd never do a man's size job again.

DICK So then you came down here?

RANKINE Yeah, and so did the depression.

DICK Tough going, eh?

RANKINE Yeah—that's when we lost our eldest kid—always had been kind of weak. Guess she just didn't get enough to eat. Hell! I don't want sympathy. I want—I don't know what I want. (*Short pause*) Damn it all. I can't keep still.

DICK What have you been thinking?

RANKINE Nothing. (*He paces like the tiger in the cage*)

DICK I don't believe it.

RANKINE All right then—everything. I don't know.

DICK What were you thinking just then?

RANKINE About Polly, I guess. (*He is surprised himself*)

POLLY Me?

RANKINE Yeah, how are you feeling, girl?

POLLY Oh, I feel fine!

RANKINE Sure you're all right?

POLLY Sure, it was nothing. I just fell over in the crowd, that's all.

RANKINE What were you doing with that bunch, anyway?

POLLY I don't know, Pop. I was mad. I had to blow off somewhere.

RANKINE Damn near got yourself blown off, if you ask me. (*Pause*) Tell me, do you think you can act in that play tonight?

POLLY But the job!

RANKINE Answer me, can't you? Do you think you can act tonight?

POLLY Why, sure, but . . .

RANKINE Then you'd better start learning your lines. Your ma and I are coming to see you.

POLLY Pop, you don't mean it? But that job, the job at the Palace! (*She gets to her feet, still not able to believe it*)

RANKINE To hell with the job. Think I'm going to have a daughter of mine parading herself in pink pants, with gold buttons and a darn fool cap on the side of her head? (POLLY *flings her arms around him*)

POLLY Oh, Pop! (*Shouting*) Mom! Mom! Come quick! (*Runs toward kitchen. She is aglow with excitement*)

MRS. R. (*Hurrying in*) What is it, dearie? Are you all right?

POLLY Mom, I'm acting tonight, and you and Pop are coming to see me.

MRS. R. What do you mean?

RANKINE What do I mean? Just this. You and I are going out tonight.

MRS. R. Going out? But we can't. (*Her mind cannot grasp it and her tone is bewildered and dead*)

RANKINE Can't? What do you mean, can't? Oh, I see, you don't *want* to go out with me, eh?

MRS. R. Oh, no, Jim! But we never have—not since the first year we was married. (*All the hurts break out in tears*)

RANKINE Hey, Lil! What's the matter? Gee, I was only trying to *please* you. I thought you'd *like* to go along. (*He puts his arms round her but he is a helpless male and he signals desperately to* POLLY *to help*)

POLLY It's okay, Mom. He really means it. You want to come, don't you?

MRS. R. (*Amid tears*) Of course I do—but I haven't got anything to wear.

POLLY That's all right. I'll fix you up. You'll look swell.

RANKINE That's right, Pol. You take her to the stores. Get anything you like. Only you've got to be a credit to your old man. This is our night out. Y'understand? (*It is a simple declaration of his love*)

MRS. R. Oh, Jim! (*She is in his arms*)

POLLY Do I understand? Come on, Mom. I'll fix everything. We'll knock him for a loop. (*To him*) Hey, you'd better get your pants pressed yourself. (*She leads her mother out of the room. Her joy and emotion come out in a final burst*) Whoopee!

RANKINE (*As he rocks to and fro*) What do you make of

women ? Take Lil there—hardly known her to cry since we were first married. And God knows I've given her cause to, sometimes. (*Pause*) Well, say something, damn you—standing there, turning the whole place upside down and never saying a word.

DICK I think you're doing fine, Jim. I'd rather listen.

RANKINE Look, I'm not changing my political opinions for you or any one else, see ?

DICK Who asked you to ?

RANKINE All right, all right, but I'm just telling you, see ? (*Settles back in his chair, rocking and thinking*)

RANKINE (*With pauses—half to himself*) Now you take Lil there. She's never had a break, nor the kids either. . . . My God! If ever a place oughta be picketed, this ought. "This home, unfair to women and children". Always blamed it on the system. I guess it's got something to do with me after all. Gotta try and make it up to those kids somehow. Well, say something, damn you!

DICK Don't know that I've much to say.

RANKINE Well, then, stop interrupting. I'm thinking. How are you going to put all this into dollars and cents ? That's the point . . . .

DICK What do you mean ?

RANKINE Why, all this you've stirred up—this apology stuff, school parties, kiss and make up and all that. I've got men on my hands who need food and shelter, see ?

DICK Couldn't we have a talk with my Dad about it ?

RANKINE Hell—that man doesn't think as we do—I mean as you do. Besides, I'm not going to any man alive asking for charity.

DICK Of course not. But between us we might get the old boy to see some sense.

RANKINE He'd die of the shock if he did. . . . Then, I suppose if something can change a fool plutocrat's half-baked son like you, I reckon anything's possible. . . . Jees, I'd split laughing to see him! Imagine him with his coat off, swapping yarns with the night shift! (*He and* DICK *burst into laughter*)

DICK Jim, when you relax you certainly do start thinking. Holy smoke! It's nearly ten. I must go and pick up Mom. She'll be pawing the ground. You don't know our family.

RANKINE You'll have to tell me about 'em some time.

DICK Okay, I'd like to. Do you think I might look in again later today—if I can give Mom the slip ? I'm supposed to be driving her around all day today.

RANKINE You do that. I've got meetings on most of the day. I'll be around later this afternoon, I guess.

DICK Goodbye, Jim.
(DICK *is almost out of the door*)

RANKINE So long, young fellow—Oh, er—Dick, thanks for coming.

DICK Thanks for breakfast. (*With a friendly jerk of his thumb in the air, he goes*)

CURTAIN

ACT III

It is the next morning, and bright sunshine pours into the Wilson's living-room. Dick *is down bright and early and is, in his own unique way, preparing the breakfast table. He fishes an extra cup out of a trouser pocket, drops a clatter of knives and spoons from his sports jacket straight on to the table. He is whistling cheerfully as he unravels the mystery of placing the cutlery in the right order, then darts across the room to tidy away a crumpled-up newspaper, which eventually goes behind a cushion on the couch. He is out in the kitchen, when* Betty *comes down the stairs. She is wearing a dressing gown and her hair is in curlers. She opens the front door, looking eagerly for the newspaper, then turns back into the room just as* Dick *re-enters.*

Dick Oh, hello, Sis ! You're awake early. Looking for something ?

Betty Yeah, I came down to see if the paper was here yet. Someone said there might be another write-up. . . . Dick, you were swell last night. You spoke much better than Dad ever would have. (*She is removing bobby-pins and fixing her hair at the mirror over the fireplace*)

Dick I felt kinda inspired last night. You weren't so bad yourself. You and Polly certainly wowed them.

Betty Hey, wasn't it amazing about Polly ?—being there I mean—after what she said in the morning ? And she wouldn't tell me a thing last night.

Dick (*Non-committally*) Hm.

Betty And just imagine! Her Mum and Dad were there,

too. I nearly passed out on the stage when they called on him for a speech.

DICK I was scared. I didn't know what the old boy was gonna say.

BETTY He sure doesn't think much of school.

DICK No, but he was okay, don't you think ?

BETTY Yeah. And all that about how pleased he was to second the motion of his young friend, Mr. Dick Wilson. Sounded rather chummy, if you ask me.

DICK Yeah. . . . Well, I guess this thing really works.

BETTY What works ?

DICK Listen, Sis, I'm on the spot. You've got to help me.

BETTY For Pete's sake! what are you talking about ?

DICK I spent most of yesterday with Jim Rankine.

BETTY Good lord! I thought you were with Mum.

DICK Oh, I was!—drove her to nineteen department stores and twenty-seven women's shops. But in between I was with Jim.

BETTY Jim ? Rankine, you mean ?

DICK Sure. He's a wonderful guy.

BETTY Dick! You don't mean you've taken his side against Dad ?

DICK No, of course not, Sis. But see here, you and I have got to get those two guys to sit around the table and talk together. The strike, the plant, everything, may depend on it.

BETTY Yeah, but how? You know Dad won't ever hear of it.

DICK That's just the point. Dad may be going to hear of it —any minute now. (*Swallowing hard*) Because I've asked Jim Rankine to breakfast.

BETTY Are you kidding ? Without consulting Dad ? Gosh, it'll be terrible. You don't think he'll really come, do you ?

DICK I don't know. It was last thing last night, after the show, and the speeches and everything. Jim said, "Good-bye", and then something about "When am I going to see you again, young feller?" And before I knew, in a sort of flash, I said, "Why not drop in for breakfast tomorrow?" He kinda looked at me and frowned. I didn't think he was going to say anything, but then he said: "Well, seeing as you dropped in on me for breakfast, I might. I just might."

BETTY You had breakfast with him? Stop kidding and talk sense.

DICK (*Shaking her*) Look, I'm not kidding. I'm serious, darn serious. Any minute now Jim Rankine may be in this very room with Mom and Dad and all of us.

BETTY Holy smoke! You're going to warn them, aren't you?

DICK If I can. It's going to be tricky with Dad, though. You know how he flies off the handle. I'll have to try and work around to it gradually.

BETTY Gosh! He'll be down any minute. He was in the bathroom when I went past.

DICK Look, Sis, you've got to help me.

BETTY But what can I do?

DICK Can you make coffee? Decent coffee.

BETTY Yes, I think so.

DICK Well for the Lord's sake, make it today and make it good and strong. If Rankine gets any of that dishwater of Mom's he'll think we're trying to poison him. (BETTY *runs out to the kitchen with the coffee pot*) And Sis, turn on the charm. Go out of your way to please him. You're swell when you do.

BETTY (*From the kitchen*) Gee! Dick!

DICK Make him feel at home. You know how to do it.

BETTY Boy! I'll try.

DICK And build up Dad all you can. Help him to be human. We've got to get them talking together. Do you get the point?

BETTY (*Coming from the kitchen*) Yes, Dick, I get the point, but I'd better go. I've got an awful lot to do in no time at all. (*She goes toward the stairs*)

DICK And look—for gosh sakes—Hedy Lamarr, change that bathrobe. Just be yourself.

BETTY You leave it to me.

DICK Say, Sis, do you ever pray?
(*She is halfway up the stairs, but this brings her down again*)

BETTY Well, what's that got to do with it?

DICK It may have a heck of a lot to do with it, before we're through. Anyway, if you ever do pray, pray now, see? Pray like hell!

BETTY Okay, Dick.
(BETTY *holds up her hand with fingers crossed to* DICK, *who does the same and smiles. She goes.* DICK *goes on struggling with the toaster, looking nervously out of the window from time to time. Enter* MRS. WILSON *gorgeously and unsuitably dressed in a sweeping black negligèe*)

MRS. W. Good morning, my darling,

DICK Good morning, Mom.
(*She looks appreciatively at the table*)

MRS. W. You're sweet to be bothered with this miserable breakfast. You're getting quite thoughtful and considerate lately. How I'm going to do all the things I've got to do today, I simply don't know. Let me see. At ten-thirty the League of Nobler Womanhood meets here. Then for lunch I've invited some of the girls from the Bridge Club. . .

DICK Mom, I've invited someone, too—to breakfast.

MRS. W. Not to breakfast, dear, surely?

DICK Yes, it's—it's Mr. Rankine, the Labour Leader. He may be here any minute.

MRS. W. *Rankine!* That man coming to this house for breakfast? Oh, don't be silly, Dick!

DICK He may be coming, Mom. I'm not sure. I asked him last night after the play.

MRS. W. But what does your father think about this? You know who the man is, I suppose?

DICK Well, I haven't had a chance to speak to Dad yet about it—but somebody's got to do something to get those two fellows to talk together, don't you see?

MRS. W. Well, all I can say is, if you've really done this terrible thing, your father will never forgive you—never. And you've seemed so sensible lately, dear.

DICK I'm sorry you feel that way about it, Mom. But if he does come you will try and be nice to him, won't you? You see, he's a friend of mine.

MRS. W. (*Very stiffly*) Well, I hope your mother knows how to behave before visitors in her own home, whatever the circumstances. I shall go upstairs and dress.

DICK That's swell, Mom. Say, where do you keep the cereal?

MRS. W. Oh, my dear boy! How can I think of cereal at a time like this? Dick, you must break it to your father. It's terrible—don't you realise? Oh, I know I'm going to have one of my dreadful heads! . . . (*She goes upstairs*)

(DICK, *more worried than ever, fetches a packet of uncooked Quaker Oats from the kitchen.* MR. WILSON *comes downstairs, worried, out of sorts, and in a hurry*)

WILSON Good morning, Dick.

DICK Good morning, Dad. (*Pulls out a chair for his father, who looks a little puzzled at this unexpected courtesy*)

WILSON Has the paper come yet?

DICK (*All eagerness to help*) Just a sec., I'll look. No, not yet.

WILSON Well, tell your mother I want breakfast at once.

DICK I think Mom's gone upstairs for a minute. Dad, I've something important to say to you.

WILSON Can't it wait, Dick? I've a great deal on my mind. If it's about money . . . (*His hand goes automatically to his wallet*)

DICK No, it isn't money, and it can't wait. It's about the trouble at the plant, Dad. Did you know it's getting serious now? They were saying in the town there might be a blow-up today. There was a big crowd around the Union headquarters pretty nearly all day yesterday, and some of those guys had blood in their eyes.

WILSON Yes, I know. You'd better keep out of this and leave things to me.

DICK Dad, you've got to see Rankine.

WILSON Oh, I have, have I? And since when have *you* started teaching me my business?

DICK But it's my business too, now—it's everybody's business—everybody who cares. Who knows where this thing may end, and what it will cost the country?

WILSON Now see here, Dick. Let's understand one another once and for all. I am not going to have any interference from you or anyone else in this matter. I don't wish to discuss it further. Let's get on with the breakfast.

DICK (*Deflated*) Yes, Dad.

(*There is a knock at the door.* DICK *stops in his tracks. He looks towards his father, finds no encouragement and slowly, despairingly, goes to the door and opens it. It's only a boy with the paper*)

NEWSBOY Collecting for the "Times", please.

(*So relieved that he greets him like a long lost friend*)

DICK Oh yeah, sure! I'll pay it. What is it? Fifty cents? Yeah. And that's for you.

NEWSBOY Thanks. (*Shouting back as he goes*) There sure is a big crowd down the street . . . and boy, do they look mad!

(NEWSBOY *goes.* DICK *shuts the door and comes back into the room, nerved to make another attempt.*)

DICK (*Pause*) Jim Rankine was at the show last night.

WILSON (*Picking up the paper, trying to disguise his temper behind it*) Well, what of it?

DICK He made a speech. He and I both did, as a matter of fact. (*Silence*) He seems an awfully human sort of guy to me.

WILSON (*Putting down paper*) Are you deliberately trying to annoy me?

DICK (*Stiffer*) I'm just trying to get you to see sense about Rankine.

WILSON Well, I know the fellow, you don't.

DICK I wonder.

WILSON What's that?

DICK I was with him yesterday.

WILSON So that's it. You've gone over to the enemy, have you?

DICK (*Roused*) Enemy be damned! It's people like you who make him an enemy. My God! I don't wonder strikes are hard to settle with people like you in the lead.

WILSON (*Really angry*) Confound you, Dick—will you stay out of this?

(*He rises and pushes back his chair, and stands glaring at* DICK, *his fists clenched*)

DICK (DICK *glares back then suddenly relaxes*) Oh my gosh! What a hell of a conciliator I am. I'm sorry, Dad, I shouldn't have said what I did. I managed to keep my temper when Rankine tried to throw me out yesterday. I ought to have known better than to lose it with you!

WILSON (*Completely at a loss*) I don't get you, Dick. . . . You'd better see a doctor.

DICK I wish you'd give me a chance to explain it to you, Dad.

WILSON Explain it! All right, go on.

DICK It all began this week at college. It was Rankine and the factory and all that, I guess. I couldn't get the stuff out of my mind. I talked a lot about it that night at the Carters. They seemed to understand the whole thing. They have something in their family that we don't have. It made me wonder why our family couldn't be like that. Why the whole world couldn't be like that.

WILSON What did the Carters say that was so remarkable?

DICK It wasn't so remarkable. It was just simple. Mr. Carter turned to me and said: "You know, Dick, if you get straight yourself, you might have a part in straightening out that mess." It seemed nuts to me at the time. But all night I couldn't sleep. All sorts of thoughts and arguments kept whirling around in my head. But there was one quiet, insistent thought that never left me—"Straighten out the mess! Straighten out the mess with Dad!" So finally I decided to come home and have a talk with you, Dad. Then I went to sleep and when I woke up the next morning, everything seemed clear. I knew I was going to be different —smaller, somehow, not half the guy I thought I was—but cleaner and more use in the world. And then I couldn't wait for Friday to come round.

WILSON Friday?

DICK Yes—and the chance to see you again. After that the old routine seemed an awful waste of time—fooling around, reading the funnies, and talking about dates and all that sort of thing. I made up my mind that the first thing I had to do was to clear the decks with you—and, well, I sort of made a start, telling you about the car. Remember?

WILSON Yes, I do.

DICK It wasn't much, I know. There's a lot more to put straight. Then I thought I'd go and see Rankine. He didn't want to see me. But I got into his house.

WILSON You did!

DICK Sure! We talked together and he gave me breakfast.

WILSON Oh, Dick, I see you meant well! But it was terribly unwise.

DICK It was crazy. But somehow things happened. I saw him two or three times yesterday.

WILSON What was the idea ?

DICK First it was to tell him pretty well what I've told you. Then I had a further idea.

WILSON Well ? (*Now they are sitting at the breakfast table together*)

DICK To get you two guys to sit round a table and talk together. He told me something about himself after that—about the accident he had in the mine. And the time one of his kids died—and about the fights he has with his own bunch.

WILSON What bunch ?

DICK The guys that are trying to control the union.

WILSON I've got a pretty tough board of directors, you know.

DICK Yes, I know, Dad. But he's got some real trouble-makers in his gang. Do you realise that some of them want to get rid of Rankine and put their own faction in control ? So then I told him something about us.

WILSON (*Grim*) What did you tell him about us ?

DICK I told him of that awful time I landed in the jug—how mad you were at the time and how swell you were afterwards.

WILSON "Swell"? I didn't know you thought I was "swell". You never said so.

DICK I've been too proud, Dad—or scared. Then we got to talking about the strike.

WILSON That's where you made your mistake.

DICK I don't think so. I don't think he wants a strike.

WILSON Well, what the hell is he agitating for one for, then?

DICK He's a fighter. You can understand that, can't you?

WILSON What do you mean?

DICK Well, you're not exactly a cream-puff yourself. Look,—suppose Jim Rankine was to (*hesitates*) get in touch with you again, you would try to be decent to him, wouldn't you? He's a prince of a guy.

WILSON (*Wearily*) It's no use, Dick. He won't. Last week there might have been a chance. There was some talk of it, but it's too late now. Besides, I just don't trust the fellow.

DICK Gosh! I guess it is kinda late. (*Looking at watch*) I wonder . . . (*There is a knock at the door*)

WILSON Who's that?

DICK (*Determined*) It might be Jim Rankine, coming to breakfast.

WILSON What? (WILSON *springs to his feet and starts for the stairs*)

DICK You've got to see him, Dad. (WILSON *goes over to the fireplace, turning his back on the room.* DICK *opens the door*)

DICK (*Doing his best with a bad situation*) Hello, Jim, come in. I'm glad to see you. Here, let me take your hat. Dad, this is Mr. Rankine. We met at the play last night and I suggested he might come up to the house. (*To* JIM) You know my Dad, don't you, Jim? (RANKINE *takes in the room—then goes towards* WILSON, *with his hand out*)

RANKINE How d'you do, Mr. Wilson? (WILSON *puts his hands in coat pockets*)

WILSON I want an explanation of this. What do you mean by coming to this house?

DICK But, Dad, I told you—I invited him.

WILSON Quiet, Dick. See here, Rankine, business is business—and a fight's a fight. But there's one thing you're going to keep your dirty hands off—

DICK Dad!

WILSON And that's my family. You planned this. You played on my boy's sympathy to get in here. Well, if that's your filthy game then let me tell you this right now. You'll leave my son alone and you'll leave this house, if I have to throw you out with my own hands!

RANKINE (*Jumping in for a fight*) Why, you dirty . . .

DICK (*Intervening*) Jim!

RANKINE I see I've made a mistake. I didn't want to come here. Your son invited me. I came—I came because I'd had it in mind to say one or two things if I could, that I'd never said before to you, or to any man alive. But that's obviously not possible now. I won't trouble you any more. (*Turns to go*)

(*But* BETTY *has entered. She is dressed simply but with great charm, and is obviously out to win the day*)

BETTY Why, Mr. Rankine. I'm glad to see you. May I take your hat? (*Taking hat*)

BETTY (*Pouring it out*) We met at the play last night, you know. Remember, Mr. Rankine? You were wonderful. Everyone said so. And there's something else I've got to thank you for. For letting Polly act. . . . I mean, after that job came along and everything. Oh, Mr. Rankine, no one else could have done her part properly—wasn't she grand?

WILSON I'm waiting, Rankine.

RANKINE It's no use, Dick. I can't stand for this. I'd better get out of here.

(*But* MRS. W. *sails in, to play her part as a perfect hostess*)

MRS. W. Is this Mr. Rankine? Won't you sit down? (*Edging him into a chair*) It was such a surprise when my son told me you were coming. I didn't know my son was a friend of yours, Mr. Rankine.

RAHKINE (*Dazed by this profusion*) I've not known him long, M'am, about twenty-four hours, in fact.

MRS. W. Come and sit down, Richard. We'll have coffee in just a minute.

WILSON I think you'd better leave us alone, Louise.

MRS. W. And wait for breakfast? Certainly not. You can talk afterwards if you want to.

(*She goes into the kitchen.* RANKINE *looks at* DICK *who encourages him to make another attempt*)

RANKINE Your son came to my house. (*Turning to* WILSON *and warming up*) I was no more glad to see him than you are to see me now. I wanted to throw him out too—but he stayed on. And that's the one reason I'm in this house right now.

WILSON What do you want to say to me, Rankine?

RANKINE (*After a pause*) Well, it isn't easy, Wilson, but it's this. For ten years I've worked in this city. And for all that time I've known you. I've fought for the things I've believed in, and I don't regret that. But for all that time I've hated you (MRS. WILSON *returns and stands motionless in doorway*) . . . like hell. I've done everything I could to make your job difficult. More than anything else in life I've wanted to see you broken. Well, thanks to Dick, I've come to see the rottenness, and the damn stupidity of all that, and I'm . . . sorry, Wilson.

BETTY (*Speaking very quietly*) Your move, Dad.

WILSON (*With great difficulty*) Yes, she's right. It is my move, I suppose. Yet, I don't know what I ought to say. These things you've been saying, Rankine, and you too, Dick. They're all very strange. They are things I didn't expect to hear from anybody. I really am very much confused. You will have to give me time to collect my thoughts.

DICK Why don't you tell us just what's on your mind?

WILSON (*With great effort*) I'd have you know I have been under great strain lately. I just can't seem to have been myself.

RANKINE Have any of us been ourselves, I wonder! Maybe that's the trouble.

WILSON What you've been saying, Rankine, I guess applies. . . (*During the last two sentences there are sounds of shouting outside as if a crowd were marching on the house. It gets louder as suddenly there is a bang on the door, and* MRS. RANKINE *rushes in, pale and breathless*)

MRS. R. (*To* RANKINE, *ignoring everyone else*) Jim, the men are coming up the road. Joe Bush is with them. They mustn't find you here!

RANKINE (*Instantly alert*) The men are coming here? Why?

MRS. R. I don't know, Jim. They're all shouting. They keep calling . . . (*Hesitates*) Mr. Wilson's name.

WILSON What's that?

MRS. R. Your name, Mr. Wilson. I'm sure they mean trouble. Oh, do come away, everybody!
(*The sounds of shouting are much nearer. It is a snarling, angry mob. The name "Wilson" is audible from time to time*)

WILSON (*Looking out of the window*) My God! This is it, all right. . . . (*In command*) Rankine, is this your doing? (*Sounds grow louder, closer*)

RANKINE No, it isn't! I swear to God it isn't. Why, the fools! The damned fools!

MRS. R. (*Desperately*) Jim, we've got to get out of here!

RANKINE No, I'm staying on.

WILSON Yes, get out, both of you. You don't belong here.

RANKINE Wilson, you and I have been getting together for the first time in ten years. I think we'd better stay together now.

WILSON But the men . . .

RANKINE (*Grimly*) The men? I may be the one person who can handle these men.

MRS. R. No. No, Jim!

RANKINE (*To* MRS. R.) You get over there. (*Pushes her back*) (*Meanwhile the leaders of the crowd have reached the steps outside the front door. There are cries of "We want Wilson"*)

WILSON I insist on one thing. This is my home. They're calling for me and I'm going to talk to them. Now keep out of line with that window—especially you, Rankine. And Betty, take your mother upstairs. Now stand back, all of you, I'm going to open the door.

BETTY We'll stay with you, Dad.

(*There is a big crowd around the front of the house—cat calls—cries of "We want Wilson", "We want Wilson, piece rates—we want our terms"—another bang on the door*)

WILSON (*To all in the room*) Keep back, everybody. I'm going to open the door.

MRS. W. Richard! (*She screams. Everything is drowned in the wild noise as* WILSON *opens the door and stands motionless. There is a cry " There he is ". There are boos and shouts*)

WILSON (*Waiting until there is momentary silence*) You're calling for me? What do you want?

A VOICE You know what we want. We want our terms. (*Taken up*)

A VOICE We want you. (*Laughter—cheers*)

A VOICE We want a rope!

} *At once*

WILSON (*Shouting*) You'll get nothing this way.

(*Cries of* "*Oh, Yeah.*")

A VOICE We'll get our terms.
A VOICE We'll get you.

WILSON Get back to your homes. We still know how to handle rabble in this town.

(*A burst of anger, booing*)

RANKINE (*Coming to Wilson*) For God's sake, shut that door !

WILSON (*Pushing* RANKINE *back*) Keep back, will you? (*Losing his nerve*) I tell you I hate this thing as much as you do. (*A sudden surge from the back and a crowd of men with a few women rush into the room pushing over chairs, etc.* RANKINE *comes forward, to ward off a direct attack on the Wilsons*)

JACK It's the chief.
BOB It's Rankine.
(*At once*)

(*There is bewildered, puzzled, questioning amongst the men.* "*What's he doing here,*" *etc.*)

RANKINE (*To* MAC *at the door*) Mac, talk to those guys outside. Tell them to pipe down. I'll be out to talk to them in a minute.

BUSH (*Coming forward from the crowd*) Oh, no, you won't, Rankine ! You're going to have to talk right here and talk plenty fast.

RANKINE Boys, I'm surprised that you'd let this sugar-coated tapeworm lead you around by the nose.

BUSH Rankine, you can't talk to me like that.

RANKINE Oh, I can't, eh ? Well, look here, Joe Bush, you may be able to fool a few hotheads, but you're not out for the good of the working man, and you damn well know it.

BUSH Boys, you're not going to let him fool you with this lingo, are you? He's a stooge.

RANKINE Bush, this sort of thing puts a dirty smear on every decent worker in the country.

BUSH You're a stooge, Rankine, or you wouldn't be in this house right now.

GIRL (*always just behind* BUSH, *egging him on*) Yeh, scab!

BUSH That's right, scab! How much does Wilson pay you to keep the boys in line?

MAC Pipe down. We know your line, Bush. (*He crosses over and stands beside* RANKINE)

RANKINE You don't need to talk to me about Wilson. I know he's no angel and I'm going to fight this thing through to the last drop of my blood. But yesterday I saw something I never expected to see. I saw signs . . .

BUSH Yeah, dollar signs, I'll bet.

JACK Let him talk.

RANKINE (*Picking up the challenge*) Jack, you're an old-timer here. What do you say to that?

JACK Keep punching, Jim. (*He crosses over to* RANKINE)

RANKINE Have any of you guys ever known me to take a red cent . . .

BUSH Yeah, we know you, Rankine, you low-down, double-crossing . . .

MAC (*Cutting in*) You shut your trap, Joe.

BUSH Oh, I know your game, Mac. Playing up to Rankine, to see if you can catch any of the bills he drops from Wilson's bank roll. And you too, Jack, you've always been a company rat.

JACK Why, you . . . (RANKINE *stops him from hitting* BUSH)

BOB (*In background*) Keep your shirt on, Bush.

BUSH Okay. I'll keep my shirt on, but there's just one question I'm going to ask Jim Rankine. (*Pause*) Rankine, what are you doing in this house?

MAN AT DOOR Yeah! That's what all the boys want to know, Jim.

RANKINE I came here by invitation—which is more than can be said for you, Joe Bush! (*Loud laugh at expense of* BUSH) You guys know as well as I do what Bush is out for. He doesn't give a damn about you. That's just a front. He's out for power for himself and the gang behind him. (*Enter* POLLY *who joins the crowd*)

BUSH Okay, then. What were you doing with Wilson's girl last night?

All at once:

POLLY You can't talk to my father like that! (*She jumps at* BUSH. RANKINE *drags her back towards family*)

BOB Boy, we're not going to stand by and listen to this filth, are we?

BUSH (*Determined to start a free-for-all*) Come on, fellows—there's more than one way of dealing with a double-crosser.

RANKINE (*Taking him by the throat*) Just a minute, Bush. And don't think I wouldn't like a tangle with you. (*Throws him back*) Let's make this a union meeting, the first we've ever held in the boss's house. How we all got here . . . well, I guess everyone can answer that question for himself. I'll tell you why I came here. Yesterday young Dick Wilson came to my home.

VIC Ah, the boss's son!

RANKINE Yeah, the boss's son, but with a difference. I saw something I never expected to see. Something that changed a good-for-nothing young punk into a man. Something which I believe can change the whole of these negotiations. Now you boys know how I've hated Wilson all these years. . . . Well, that hatred has blinded me to everything, blinded me to your best interests—the best interests of the whole country . . .

VIC Aw! Nuts to that patriotic stuff.

RANKINE Yeah? And blinded me to the fact that our own little private wars here at home are costing our own boys overseas their lives. (VIC *steps back shamefaced*) Well, thank God I've had my eyes opened. I can see a hell of a lot more in this situation. We've got the right to a square deal.

GIRL (*Pounds table*) We sure have!

RANKINE And so has every American. But we've got to do things different . . . we've got to pull together somehow, or there won't be any America. It'll be sold out by guys like Joe Bush and the gang behind him.

BUSH'S MEN Aw, you're a company rat.

RANKINE You don't need to talk to me about the Company. . . . Boys, let's face facts for a change. These days it's not a question of who's right, but what's right. We've all been trying to blame the other fellow. Joe, you've blamed me, I've blamed Wilson, Wilson's blamed the men. . . . Well, let's get honest for a change . . . we're all of us to blame.

BOB Yeah, Jim, but how about them piece rates?

RANKINE That's a fair question and I'll give you a fair answer. I believe in twelve hours I can bring you new proposals for a settlement. Different terms than we've had so far. Terms made in a new spirit. Now we all want a fair deal from the bosses? (*Cries of* "*Yeah*") All right then, boys, how about a fair deal from labour now?

MAN Okay, Jim. What is your plan?

RANKINE All right, it's this—first of all I want you all to clear out of here—all of you except you, Bob—Jack—and Mac. And I pledge you my word that what we do here will be fair to labour. It'll be honourable and it'll be laid before you all at the meeting tonight. Now, is it a go?

BOB That's fair. (*Cries of* " *Okay . . . Come on fellows* " *etc.*)

RANKINE All right. Those in favour say " Aye " (*A loud* "*Aye*") Those to the contrary " No." (*A few loud* "*Noes*)"

Do the " Ayes " have it? (*A very loud " Aye "*) All right, then, boys—eight o'clock tonight at the Union Hall. All right, Bush, that means you, too. (*The men begin to move out.* BUSH *stays—lights up a cigarette*)

BUSH Okay, Rankine. But you've sure got yourself a long way out on a limb. (*Exit* BUSH)

RANKINE Bob, you and Jack talk to those men outside. Tell them the situation. They'll get it if you put it to 'em straight. And then come right back here. I'll need your help before we're through. Mac, you stay on.

(*Exit* BOB *and* JACK. MAC *stands in the doorway.* BOB *and* JACK *can be heard quieting the crowd outside.* WILSON *stands motionless at the fireplace.* RANKINE *closes the door and turns back into the room. He is exhausted and suddenly unsure of himself. He sinks into a chair.* MRS. RANKINE *goes to him and puts her hand on his shoulder*)

MRS. R. Oh, Jim!

MRS. W. You're a brave man, Mr. Rankine. (*To* MRS. RANKINE) Would he like a cup of coffee ?

(MRS. RANKINE *nods.* MRS. WILSON *starts to the kitchen*)

MRS. W. (*To* MRS. RANKINE) Won't you help me? (*They go out together*)

DICK (*Moving over to* RANKINE) Nice going, Jim.

RANKINE (*In a flat voice, to* DICK) Yeah. And what's the pay-off ? I've promised those guys a settlement—a fair settlement tonight ; and what have I got to go on ? Nothing! Absolutely nothing. He's only got to go on standing there like a statue, and make me the biggest fool in town. I tell you, I've got nothing to go on.

DICK Is that true, Dad ?

WILSON Yesterday it would have been true. But today you do have something to go on . . . something you brought in with you . . . trust . . . honesty. . . . Yes, but it's

bigger than that. . . . It's something I'd forgotten. . . . I guess most of us have. . . . It's the forgotten factor. . . . It's . . .

DICK It's God, isn't it, Dad ?

WILSON Yes, I suppose it is. Whatever it is, it's going to make some changes around here, and the Lord knows I need 'em. You two kids know that. And Louise. . . . You know it too, Rankine. I've been a fool—I've made you my enemy when you could have been my friend. I know some of your demands are reasonable. . . . I've said so all along . . . so have my associates . . . privately. Why haven't we said so publicly ? . . . We were afraid. We thought it might look weakness. Weakness! We didn't trust you. . . . I'm sorry, Rankine . . . (*Holds out his hand.* RANKINE *gets up and shakes hands*) How about sitting down and showing the world what two hard-headed fellows can work out, when they let down the barriers and talk sense ? (*They sit at the table together*)

(MRS. WILSON *and* MRS. RANKINE *come in with coffee*)

MRS. W. Here's your coffee, Mr. Rankine. . . . We've brought some for you too, Richard.

(WILSON *offers* RANKINE *some sugar. The men raise their cups and silently toast each other as the curtain falls*)

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